

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In Reply To:

8140 (924.3) P

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February 1, 2006

EMAIL TRANSMISSION - 2/1/06

Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2006-040

Expires: 09/30/07

To: State Management Team

From: State Director

Subject: Guidance for Cultural Resource Investigations on Oil and Gas
Projects

Program Area: Cultural Resources and Fluid Minerals

Purpose: The policy in the attached guidance is aimed at clarifying current cultural resource requirements for oil and gas actions. These policy changes will result in time saving efficiencies for oil and gas companies by reducing the number of questions regarding the location and quality of cultural resource work.

Policy and Action:

The guidance has been reviewed by all field offices and comments from that review have been incorporated. We are now forwarding the completed policy guidance to the field. We have also transmitted this guidance to all oil and gas operators and cultural resource permittees that routinely operate or work in the three-state area of Montana and the Dakotas.

Timeframe: Guidelines will be implemented upon receipt.

Budget Impact: None.

Background: The changes in policy reflect the results of continued monitoring of cultural resource reports and field compliance reviews completed by BLM staff during the past 2 years. The modifications will improve the quality of information in cultural resource inventory reports, reduce delays in project approval, and lessen the potential for adverse impacts to cultural resources. A new section would clarify BLM requirements for coal bed natural gas operations. The policy changes are also in response to WO IM No. 2005-227, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 and Oil and Gas Permitting.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: Guidance will augment guidelines contained in Handbook H-8110-1.

Coordination: The guidance was coordinated with all field offices.

Contact: Please direct questions regarding this IM to Gary Smith, Deputy Preservation Officer, for Montana/Dakotas, at 406-896-5214.

Signed by: Howard A. Lemm, Acting State Director

Authenticated by: Kathy Iszler, Staff Assistant (MT-924)

1 Attachment

1-Cultural Resource Requirements for Oil and Gas Operations in Montana
and the Dakotas (12 pp in its entirety)

Distribution: w/Attn.

Associate Field Manager, Havre Field Station

Associate Field Manager, Glasgow Field Station